

REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 4, 8 and 19 have been amended, claims 1-3 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer in favor of presentation of this subject matter in a continuation or divisional application, and claims 21-26 have been added. Accordingly, claims 4-26 are currently pending in the application, of which claims 4 and 8 are independent claims.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 4-20 contain allowable subject matter.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendments do not add new matter to the application and are fully supported by the specification.

In view of the above amendments and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and timely withdrawal of the pending objections and rejections for the reasons discussed below.

Claim Objection

In the Office Action, Claims 4-7 and 8-20 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 4 and 8 have been amended to include all of the limitations of the base claim 1. This amendment is made for the sole purpose of having allowable subject matter being allowed as soon as possible. This amendment is not made for the purpose of avoiding prior art or narrowing the claimed invention, and no change in claim scope is intended. Therefore Applicants do not intend to relinquish any subject matter by these amendments. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 4 and 8, as amended, and claims 6-7 and 9-20, which depend

therefrom, overcome the stated objection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection for claims 4-20.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,808,321 issued to Mitnaga, *et al.* (“Mitnaga”). Claims 1-3 stand further rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,534,716 issued to Takemura (“Takemura”).

As noted above, claims 1-3 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer in favor of presentation of this subject matter in a continuation or divisional application.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejections of claims 1-3.

Added Claims

Added claims 21-26 are directed to additional features of the invention, which are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Since these claims depend from allowable claims 4 and 8, they are also allowable.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 4-7 and 8-20 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 4 and 8 have been amended to include all of the limitations of the base claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claims 4 and 8, and claims 6-7 and 9-26 that depend therefrom are in condition for allowance.

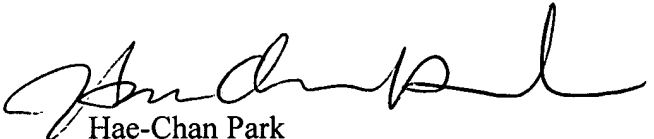
Conclusion

Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the pending Office Action and respectfully submits that all of the stated objections and grounds for rejection have been overcome or rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are allowable and that the application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the number below to expedite prosecution.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: November 17, 2004

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